



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: Jun 17th, 2020

Time: 7:15PM

Location: Via Zoom conference

Attendees: *Executive committee*: Christopher Tonkin (chair), Doug Greenfield, Jack Johnson, Muris Kobaslija, Adam MacNeill, Doug Mayo-Wells, Scott Smith
Town of Arlington: Daniel Amstutz

Kate Byrd, David Creedon, Anne Dinoto, Linda Epstein, Rod Holland, Stephan Miller, Galen Mook, Ann Olson, Alison Piasecki, Sandra Proctor, Thomas Proctor, Steve Revilak, Brian Ristuccia

1. Introductions, Ground rules

Meeting opens with review of emergency remote public meeting guidance consistent with Governor Baker's executive order of March 12th, 2020: The Governor's order suspends the requirement of Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a public and accessible location. Public meetings may meet entirely remotely as long as the public can access the meeting. Committee secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved.

Executive committee roll call:

Doug Greenfield, present

Jack Johnson, present

Muris Kobaslija, present

Adam MacNeill, present

Doug Mayo-Wells, present, taking minutes

Scott Smith, present

Christopher Tonkin, present

From the Town of Arlington:

Daniel Amstutz, present

Participants are invited to introduce themselves and affiliation, if any:

Kate Byrd, resident

David Creedon, resident, bike commuter

Anne Dinoto, resident, Appleton St neighborhood

Linda Epstein, resident, Appleton St neighborhood

Rod Holland, ABAC member at large, Precinct 7 Town Meeting member

Stephan Miller, resident

Galen Mook, executive director, MassBike

Ann Olson, resident, Appleton St neighborhood

Alison Piasecki, Charlie Proctor's partner

Sandra Proctor

Thomas Proctor, Charlie Proctor's brother

Steve Revilak

Brian Ristuccia, resident

2. Previous meeting minutes approval

Note: Draft minutes for April *and* May were submitted for review prior to the meeting.

Doug Mayo-Wells advises that edits submitted by Scott Smith have been incorporated and that spelling changes have been made (Adam MacNeill's name is spelled incorrectly on the Town website).

Daniel Amstutz requests edit on page 5 of May minutes to clarify the signal behavior at Appleton: the lights turn red for pedestrian walk signal.

Scott Smith moves to accept minutes as amended.

Mayo-Wells seconds the motion.

Christopher Tonkin takes a roll call vote:

Doug Mayo-Wells: Yes

Doug Greenfield: Yes

Muris Kobaslija: Yes

Adam MacNeill: Yes

Jack Johnson: Yes

Scott Smith: Yes

Christopher Tonkin: Yes

SO VOTED: (7-0)

3. COBWEB

(Cops On Bikes With Education for Bicyclists)

No officer present for this meeting, however Christopher Tonkin advises that the person who schedules meeting participation has returned from extended sick leave so this should be resolved for July. It would be beneficial to have the same officer attending consistently, Tonkin needs to discuss with Police Captain Curran.

Thomas Proctor mentions coordinating with Officer Corey Rateau in connection with the Design Review Committee.

Smith clarifies that Corey Rateau is a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), and a traffic officer, but not a bike officer, and not always available to attend TAC. The Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) has been drawing from the officers who have been through the COBWEB training.

Tonkin notes that the on-duty officer during the meeting scheduled time is designated to attend. Amstutz says it is highly likely that Officer Rateau will be the Design Review Committee liaison, but notes that police work on an hourly basis, so off-duty attendance of a meeting is challenging.

4. TAC report

(Transportation Advisory Committee)

TAC met on 10 June. Scott Smith provides a summary of discussion:

Len Diggins is on the MBTA Advisory Board and just became a Select person.

Amstutz discussed town issues, generally favorable report on shared streets. Suggestion of shared street network connecting to Mystic River.

Mass/Appleton discussion was only 2 days after Select Board meeting, so no formal request to appoint a member from TAC yet, but expecting one forthcoming shortly.

Year has sadly seen 2 fatalities, a bike/car accident at Mass/Appleton and a pedestrian fatality earlier in the year on Chestnut St (off Mystic St). TAC discussed remediation approaches for crosswalks on this busy street.

5. Select Board meeting on Mass/Appleton crash

Tonkin advises that the Select Board will be appointing select committee to look into the matter. Will ask for members from TAC and ABAC among others. Request not formally received but suggests ABAC appoint someone now in advance of request to streamline process. Tonkin asks for volunteers.

Smith has little day-to-day experience with the intersection but also may be representative from TAC, so not volunteering from ABAC.

Mayo-Wells asks if time commitment is understood. Tonkin: Not clear.

Galen Mook asks who makes the decision as to who is committee appointee?

Amstutz clarifies that Select Board likely approves Town Manager (TM)'s slate unless there is some reason for controversy

Mook asks if any specific qualifications have been requested by the TM
Amstutz shares memo from TM with desired make up of committee (including local business, residential representatives) and notes that qualifications are TM's prerogative

Rod Holland advises that he could volunteer if needed, or serve as backup.
Tonkin can also volunteer, if daytime time commitment is manageable.

Mook notes that a representative from Ottoson school will also be on the committee.
Smith notes that the committee has also increased scope of study to include the Lowell St/Mass Ave intersection on the west, and the BurtonSt/Forest St intersection on the east of Appleton St/Appleton Pl.

Adam MacNeill moves that Tonkin designated to the committee, with Holland as backup, when the request arrives.

Smith seconds the motion.

Christopher Tonkin takes a roll call vote:

Doug Mayo-Wells: Yes

Doug Greenfield: Yes

Muris Kobaslija: Yes

Adam MacNeill: Yes

Jack Johnson: Yes

Scott Smith: Yes

Christopher Tonkin: Yes

SO VOTED: (7-0)

6. Ghost bike memorial for Charlie Proctor

Tonkin reports this has been approved by the select board. Next stage not clear.
Thomas Proctor advises that communication is ongoing between the family and the Town Manager.

7. Second crash at Mass Ave/Appleton on June 14th

Brian Ristuccia rode through the area last night and observed a temporary intervention with cones, and left turn prohibitions on to Appleton St/Pl.

Although no official information has been released, Ristuccia reports seeing photos of scene where the car came to rest after the crash, very similar position and windshield damage very similar to the fatal crash on May 5th. Ristuccia met the wife of the injured party and understands the victim has not regained consciousness and remains in intensive care as of June 16th.

Ristuccia forwarded to ABAC a ride-through video showing the temporary interventions and lighting conditions for both west- and east bound traffic, taken at approximately 7pm on June

16th. Ristuccia suggests that ABAC committee should take position on the temporary intervention.

Ristuccia believes the current intervention (temporary center barrier and do-not-enter onto Appleton St.) substantially reduces the risk of another similar crash. Ristuccia also notes reports on social media of a third recent crash with no serious personal injury, but damage to a bicycle. Center barrier will stop vehicles from "creeping" into intersection and blocking crosswalks; this seems like a big win.

Ristuccia did not observe negative traffic congestion effects, e.g., at Park/Mass Ave. Since traffic volume is reduced due to COVID-19, may be possible to leave this restriction in place. Even after school starts, maybe be able to request dropoffs for Ottoson school avoid left turns onto Appleton (use Quincy St instead).

Ristuccia emphasizes that the rapid effective response is awesome, but still need a solution that does not depend on a daily police presence. Also history of problems at this intersection not just at sunset, but in daylight, after dark etc. Something slightly more permanent, bolted center barrier, non-removable signs, and pavement markings as proposed by EALS could prevent further accidents until a full permanent redesign (e.g., center island, pavement geography changes) can be implemented.

Tonkin mentions a communication from Diane Mahon of the Select Board that effective immediately and until further notice no left turns onto either Appleton St or Appleton Pl are allowed from westbound Mass Ave traffic between 5:30pm and 8:00pm.

Smith thanks Ristuccia for the video, notes that it effectively demonstrates solar glare issues. Smith agrees with concerns about requirement for police presence and cites no-left-turn restrictions into the library, with neither a physical barrier nor active enforcement, compliance goes down.

Amstutz can provide a recent study from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, dealing with safety benefits of a barrier within center double yellow line, to protect crosswalk so left turn can't be made too early. Demonstrates these types of interventions do raise safety.

MacNeill mentions an email from resident Barbara Mccauley to Department of Public Works (DPW) regarding possibly incorrect configuration of the lights; this has been forwarded to the TM as well.

Muris Kobaslija notes a mention on social media that reflective backplates may have been installed on the lights to aid visibility, but has not had an opportunity to verify yet.

8. Town Meeting Update

MacNeill reports there is nothing bike-related from Town Meeting, only addressed financial items, and has concluded.

Tonkin summarizes the warrant issue to expand hours of operation of the Minuteman Bikeway, with support from Arlington Police Department (APD), and clarifies that there are no hours of operations restrictions elsewhere on the Bikeway.

Smith clarifies that \$20,000 for bike share was on the consent agenda. MacNeill verifies that this passed.

Amstutz makes 3 points related to bicycle issues:

1. Plan is to sign agreement with Blue Bikes to bring them into Arlington, connect with existing network in Cambridge, Somerville, etc.. Smith and Holland had volunteered to research and recommend potential locations for bike sharing stations, Amstutz will reach out to them, Phil Goff of EALS, and others
2. \$25,000 in Planning Department funds for bike parking/racks in Town was also approved in the consent agenda
3. Community Preservation Act funding is being sought for study of Minuteman bikeway for issues such as lighting, or widening at problematic intersections (e.g., Water St.). This request was retracted, CPA is only moving forward with previously funded projects at this time (e.g., Wellington Park, Reservoir). Will try to get this back onto funded project list next Town Meeting (CPA had previously approved this funding).

9. Shared Streets Pilot

Kobaslija expresses enthusiasm for pilot, uses streets daily, observes a marked difference, hopes barricades can be made permanent

Amstutz observes that Kobaslija appears in photographs taken by consultant

Amstutz summarizes: Conducted week-long pilot, conducted evaluation, presented to Select Board on 6/1; Board response was very favorable.

Board presentation included options for moving forward including networks of shared streets, shared streets not connected to a network, and commercial areas. Work is ongoing. (Economic Recovery Task Force and outdoor dining planning are competing priorities for Town resources.) In connection with this effort Amstutz plans a visit to Somerville on 6/18 to review shared streets implementations in northeast Somerville.

Still learning; hope to bring back to Brooks but connect, e.g., to Orvis Rd and up to Mystic River (soliciting help from Mystic River Watershed Assn; intern there has experience with tactical urban projects for Boston).

Need to strategize public outreach, present some options to Town Manager to move ahead (in next week or two). More than a 1-week pilot, probably to last through the summer.

Kobaslija asks if there was any negative feedback?

Amstutz: Yes. Some ideologically opposed, concerns about mixing with vehicle traffic, (25mph is still too fast for some people). Stepping up traffic calming component in response, to restrict vehicles to 15/20mph. Also some concerns about crowding, affect on through traffic, e.g., dropoff and pickup at Hardy School. Need to monitor network effects (e.g, congestion on Mass Ave and Lake St) and assess, adjust as necessary.

Mook: 2 points

1. Wonders if slow streets implementations are being considered as temporary fixes to intersections like Appleton St/Pl or as a separate initiative?
2. Advises that State just released criteria to fund tactical treatments grants up to 300K\$ municipalities can apply for. Offers technical support from MassBike if required to see if DOT can support (guidance/finance) to make shared streets more permanent.

Amstutz, to 1st point: shared streets are certainly using similar strategies to those that could be applied to remediations such as Appleton/Mass Ave. The Design Review Committee will be looking at this, need to establish for committee members, notably DPW, APD that this is a viable set of tools for short term changes besides paint. Shared streets did not have 24x7 police presence, and APD observed that they were effective. Hopeful that shared streets experience does translate into remediation for Appleton/Mass Ave before end of year (still a short time frame for implementing a transportation projects). Finally the Town has limited experience with quick, movable interventions; they do require monitoring.

To second point, yes, aware of new criteria, and will apply once proposal is vetted with TM, DPW. On question of permanence, need to evaluate, many things are changing. Putting in place for Summer under assumption the Fall could represent return to normal. If interventions are in place for a number of months (or end of year) people will acclimatize; could make permanent installations more broadly acceptable. But need to understand implementation of permanent features (currently, slow streets elements are highly mobile and can be removed quickly).

Tonkin shares observations of Leonard St in Belmont. Was closed at both ends to all traffic with barricades (but still providing space for emergency vehicle access). Allowed for tables in front of restaurants, looked busy. Barriers were removed morning of June 17; restaurants did well, but other merchants complained of loss of foot traffic.

10. Connect Arlington/Sustainable Transportation Plan

Amstutz: Transportation survey is out, posted to new places recently, leaving it up through end of month, over 900 responses to date.

Trying to get outreach beyond social media, working with Arlington Council on Aging to reach Arlington Housing Authority properties, elder residents.

Planned public forum on June will now be virtual and planned for July 1.

Nelson\Nygaard working on transportation factbook, will be more robust/detailed than anything done in past.

- Maps, demographic information, information about current transportation system
- Connects demographic/geographic/usage information, e.g.,
 - Most multifamily housing is in East Arlington, whereas the west side of town is mostly single family except along Mass Ave.
 - Morningside area, hard to get around because streets do not go straight

Draft has been received and comments submitted.

Planning more public involvement soon, ran some focus groups, planning more (on public transit and neighborhood transportation issues).

Steve Revilak commends the map-based visualizations

11. Bike Friendly Community certification

Application due mid-August

Amstutz will send draft to Tonkin, who will delegate sections of the draft to ABAC members
Amstutz notes that application should reflect past 4 years, not COVID response.

12. Arlington High School (AHS) rebuild

Kobaslija: Observed multiple times, Mass ave traffic not affected by construction

Amstutz: Traffic impact analysis was done for rebuild by a traffic engineering consultant. TAC, Building Committee had comments. Supplementary analysis recently received addressing concerns raised in comments:

- From TAC, with the loop in front of the building being removed, and dropoff/pickup pushed to Schouler Ct or Mill Brook Dr, is a new signal required at Mill Brook Dr/Mill St?
- Possibility of 3rd entrance through Grove St DPW property (currently can't drive through but can walk through to Schouler Ct). Analysis considered implications for potential signals at Grove St/Mass Ave and Grove St/Summer St
- If there is a bikeway connection to AHS property, might be student dropoffs on Summer St (at the bikeway); considered bump-in for parking spaces and crosswalk on Summer St.
- Considered buffered bike lane or cycle track on the Mass Ave side of school. (Amstutz did not agree with consultant recommendations on this point.)

TAC members Howard Muise, Jeffery Maxtutis and Melissa Luabe are evaluating, haven't communicated back to consultant yet.

Tonkin: Should we ask TAC for a presentation of bike-related issues?

Amstutz: TAC will be sending comments back to TM, not sure of next steps after that.

13. Liaison with DPW

Potential installation of mirror to improve visibility safety on bikeway at Gold's Gym parking lot (by Park Ave). Tonkin and Holland conducted test and observed visibility improvements. Contacted Mike Rademacher/DPW. There are concerns because Gold's Gym parking lot is not a public way. Tonkin and Holland believe an easement for Gold's Gym expansion some years ago was contingent on maintaining access to the bikeway.

Mook advises that David Watson is former MassBike member currently serving on Redevelopment Board (who may have details).

Tonkin has reached out to Watson for those details.

Tonkin emphasizes the intervention is warranted. Eastbound visibility is poor due to knotwood (which may be addressed, but unclear on timeframe). Westbound visibility is poor due to railway arch/downhill slope. Already at least one accident.

Amstutz doesn't understand concern, mirror across from entrance should still be within railroad right of way.

Tonkin: concern is about encouraging use of access point which is not public. However it is the only access point at Park (other than the stairway, which is not conducive to bike use).

Smith: There may have been a mirror previously installed to alleviate poor visibility on a public way for the private way exit from Brigham Square apartments onto Mill St (behind R.W. Shattuck) to alleviate poor visibility. So there is precedent for this type of installation (even though that mirror is no longer installed).

Jack Johnson notes the Planning Department might also have records of any easement. Johnson also recalls David Watson's involvement. Johnson observes that Gold's Gym is tenant, not owner of the property, and mentions that customer access to the gym would be beneficial to the business. Related: Bow Street is being repaved, and bikeway ramp at Bow is being improved as part of that.

14. Bike Counts

Amstutz: Several observations related to counts:

- Challenges & issues with the automatic counter at Swan Pl, pedestrian sensor has been unreliable over last 6 months. Counter stopped reporting all numbers on May 17. However the vendor Eco-counter has decided to send totally new parts, so should be resolved soon.
- Bike lane closed recently as Mass Ave/Mystic St, likely due to construction at Whittemore Park, may affect/complicate bike counts in the area.

- Construction (utility work) on Pleasant St side, finding a place to stand may be difficult.
- Need to adopt procedures for social distances, everyone needs to bring their own count sheet instead of trading off (soft copies are available).

Tonkin: Should determine location first, then schedule.

Amstutz: MassDot grant covers wide range of COVID mobility responses (e.g., shared streets but also converting parking spaces to dining, connecting bicycle facilities). Can submit 3 different types of projects.

Could possibly apply to Mass Ave/Appleton or Mass Ave between Bartlett Ave and Pleasant St (gap in bike lanes), counts would help provide context for that.

Tonkin: How should we cover? E.g., 2 hrs in 3 different places vs one place for 6 hours ?

Amstutz: 12 hour count would be nice, not clear when peak is. Commuting period not really occurring right now. If we were to look at a 6 or 3 hour period not sure when best time would be

Smith: Do we have automatic bike data from April? Suggests observing afternoon/evening. Morning tends to be light, evening more people exercising (but hot weather could reverse that). Maybe 3-6pm at the 3 proposed locations?

Tonkin: Appleton committee will likely want count data there, so not address as part of this ABAC count?

Holland: Longer duration counts in fewer areas are likely to yield better results, still interested in split of Mass Ave vs. Bikeway use in Arlington Center, but can defer that analysis for later.

Amstutz: Most valuable would be in front of Town Hall or Jason Russell house. MassBike may be able to help with volunteers, extra volunteers could help at Appleton. Not clear yet if traffic data collector will be hired as part of Appleton effort, but if so should be able to count both cars and bikes. APD equipment may also be able to collect both bike and car data. Counting all movements could be challenging.

Tonkin: Let's count in front of Town Hall now, give Appleton more thought

Smith: Place to sit, not much rain shelter.

Amstutz: Would like to see pedestrian as well as bike counts

Scheduling discussion, agree on Thursday June 25th. Will try for 7am-7pm (but morning/afternoon are more critical).

Tonkin: Will email usual volunteers, also advise new social distancing protocols.

Mook: Will spread word to MassBike volunteer network

15. Annual social

Defer until more is understood about recovery.

16. Tour of Arlington

Smith advocates for socially distanced tour.

Tonkin: maybe in September to replace town day? Consider whether to have maps, guides stationed at stopping points?

Kobaslija; Landry's is doing socially distance rides to benefit Black Lives Matter, 5 riders at a time (can do as a family), various timings. Can learn over the course of the summer what works well.

17. Other business

Amstutz: Received email suggesting marking 6 ft distances on the bikeway to aid visualization. Seems helpful.

Tonkin: Could mark several blocks out from Arlington Center. Use same temporary paint that was used for haikus?

David Creedon: May double 3-foot blocks, stay 2 blocks away

Stephan Miller: Proofed map sent by Peggy Enders (Lexington Bike Committee), would nice to have more eyes on it.

Tonkin: Enders also advised of hazard on bikeway south of Lake St, something sticking up

Amstutz: Likely temporary, related to Lake St bikeway project

Kobaslija: Mass Ave in Arlington Center eastbound, opposite fire station, still in bad shape. Repairs discussed, but not implemented (staffing is likely a challenge for the town).

Mayo-Wells: Do social distancing markings not just at Arlington Center, but Alewife, Lake St, other key entrances/exits from path?

Amstutz: Wherever the social distancing signs are.

Greenfield: Meet both in July and August?

Tonkin suggests we meet if there is quorum, Appleton will be ongoing.

Scott Smith makes motion to adjourn

Kobaslija seconds

Christopher Tonkin takes a roll call vote:

Doug Mayo-Wells: Yes

Doug Greenfield: Yes

Muris Kobaslija: Yes

Adam MacNeill: Yes

Jack Johnson: Yes

Scott Smith: Yes

Christopher Tonkin: Yes

(Adjourned)